Upgradation of State Highways in H.P.

†1006. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that keeping in view the increasing number of road accidents in Himachal Pradesh during the last few years, it has become necessary to convert State Highways into National Highways;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to upgrade State Highways;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by Government to avert accidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) to (d) Increase in accident is not a criteria for declaration of new National Highways. However, during the Ninth Plan period, 334 km. of new National Highways had been declared in Himachal Pradesh. 5 more proposals for declaration of State roads as National Highways in Himachal Pradesh had been received and have now been returned to the State Government in June, 2002 for review based on the revised criteria for declaration of new National Highways. There is no proposal to declare any new National Highways in the country at present due to fund constraints. The Government may however, consider declaration of a few State Highways as National Highways during the course of the 10th Five Year Plan from amongst the modified proposals to be received from various States keeping in view the traffic needs *inter-se* priority and availability of funds.

Engineering measures being taken to improve safety on National Highways include widening and strengthening, improvement of geometrics, provision of retro-reflective road signs, thermoplastic road markings, parapets, retaining walls, railings etc.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.